

# Transromanica: Transnational Culture and Tourist Project and its Importance for Inclusion in Croatia's Tourist Offer

**Damir Demonja\***

Original paper  
UDC 379.8:910.4(4)  
Received in July 2007

*Transromanica, Transnational Network and Itineraries of the Romanesque, is an international developing project, a part of the European Union program INTERREG III B CADSES.*

*The long-term Transromanica aims are: participation of all interested countries and regions in cultural tourism and involvement of new regional and state partners in the project's network; making and realizing projects related to the revitalization of the territories rich in Romanesque cultural heritage; increasing the number of visitors/tourists in the territories with Romanesque monuments, as well as the interest in cultural tourism; increasing the number of cultural events, organized visits and new cultural and tourist programs; increasing the level of protection and restoration of cultural heritage especially Romanesque ones and spreading the project to other European countries. Achieved Transromanica goals, among others, are: tourist and cultural itineraries, training programs, marketing tools (Romanesque on the Internet, data bases, brochures, CD-ROMs, DVDs, participation at international tourist fairs, promotion of Romanesque heritage in different European languages, presentation of the project to the different economy sectors,...) and a „virtual Romanesque center”.*

**Key Words:** Transromanica, Europe, Croatia, Romanesque, Heritage, Culture, Tourism.

## 1. Introduction

The Transromanica project is based on the common Romanesque cultural heritage of Europe created from mid-10th century to mid-13th century. The initiative for the project, encouraged by the European Union, was to introduce to the general public the fascinating Romanesque heritage, pri-

marily the architecture: places, churches, castles and forts. Four countries, notably their five regions, through this project refer to their common roots within the contemporary, politically feasible Europe (Figure 1).

\* Damir Demonja, PhD, Research Associate, Institute for International Relations, Zagreb, e-mail: ddemonja@irmo.hr





Figure 1: Map with the states and their regions, partners in the Transromanica project

Transromanica, the Transnational Network and Itineraries of the Romanesque, is an international development project within the EU program of INTERREG III B CADSES (CADSES includes the area of Central Europe, the Adriatic, the Danube, and Southeast Europe, Figure 2). The project is based on the idea of promoting the integration process of enlarged, united Europe by way of **common cultural and historical roots – the Romanesque heritage**. The main project manager is the Ministry for Construction and Transport of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, and the partners are: Federal States of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from Germany, the provinces of Modena, Parma and Ferrara from Northern Italy, the province of Carinthia in Austria, and Slovenia. The total value of the project, i.e. its budget, is EUR 2.1 million: 2/3 of the funds were allocated from the EU Program, and 1/3 was contributed by the partners. The project took 36 months, i.e. three years, from November 2003 to October 2006.



Figure 2: Map with the CADSES cooperation area marked



## 2. Transromanica and INTERREG III B CADSES

The purpose of Transromanica is to strengthen sustainable regional development and promote spatial cohesion through cultural tourism based on the common European Romanesque heritage. From A.D. 950 to 1250, for the first time in Europe, regions and countries of different cultural identities developed a characteristic and unique style in art and architecture. Transromanica aims at making those common historical roots recognisable throughout the CADSES area of cooperation and establishing links to the new EU Member States. This will be achieved by developing products for culture tourism that reach beyond national borders.

The main instruments of Transromanica are the clear concept, feasible implementation and well-devised marketing of transnational cultural routes linked by representative, landmark Romanesque buildings i.e. places in partner areas, beginning from the German provinces of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in the North, through the provinces of Modena, Parma and Ferrara in Northern Italy, to the provinces of Carinthia in Austria, and Slovenia in the East. In the course of devising Romanesque itineraries, other related rural and urban places in partner regions will be integrated, and the existing differences will fade giving way to attractive *cultural landscapes*. While promoting the activities, simultaneously, innovative solutions will be presented concerning the maintenance, management and presentation of Romanesque buildings or places (areas), using the new media in order to increase the interest in the Romanesque heritage.

The major priorities of Transromanica within INTERREG III B CADSES are:

- Encouraging sustainable spatial development, social and economic cohesion,
- Development of efficient and permanent traffic systems and improvement of approach to information society,
- Promotion and management of space, the natural and cultural heritage, and
- Environmental protection, resource management and prevention of natural disasters.

## 3. Goals of Transromanica

Transromanica has many goals, and some of the more important ones are:

- Promotion of the common European heritage, Romanesque, and devising a *Romanesque landscape*

by re-evaluating tourism, encouraging sustainable regional development, and deepening the understanding of common cultural heritage among the population,

- Promotion of international competition among the international tourist industry and destinations, and finding additional income by developing and implementing a transnational marketing strategy, cooperative structures, goods and management standards in cultural tourism related to the Romanesque heritage,
- Improvement of the protection and innovative management and presentation of Romanesque places, buildings, itineraries and landscapes by increasing interest in the common European heritage, developing skills through exercises, training, new media solutions, integration of regional target groups, implementation of management structures, devising protective measures based on cultural and economic premises,
- Development of a transnational Romanesque route in five partner regions to include 25 top monuments i.e. sights (Slovenia, Germany: the provinces of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, Austria: the province of Carinthia, Italy: the provinces of Modena, Parma and Ferrara),
- Long-term transnational participation in cultural tourism and inclusion of new regional and other state partners in the network,
- Preparing feasibility studies/working concepts for the revitalization of the Romanesque areas,
- Increasing the number of visitors in the areas with Romanesque monuments/sights,
- Increasing interest in cultural tourism,
- Increasing the number of cultural events, organised visits, development of new programs,
- Raising the level of protection and maintenance of cultural, primarily Romanesque, heritage,
- Increasing the interest in and consciousness about the common source/roots among the European culturally-minded population, and
- Spreading the project into Central and South-east Europe.

## 4. Products and Tangible Results of Transromanica

The Transromanica project has had several specific products:

1. **Tourist cultural itinerary** in each of the partner countries, with five top monuments as links within the tourist offer which includes a variety of selectable forms of tourism (cultural, rural, gastronomic, enological, etc.).
2. **Marketing tools:** excellently presented Romanesque style in partner countries on the Internet,



[www.transromanica.com](http://www.transromanica.com), in English, German, Italian and Slovenian, with many maps, photographs, data, information, tourist offer, and links to other useful websites. Marketing tools also include: databases, CD-ROMs, DVDs, exhibitions, permanent presence and presentations at international tourism fairs, promotional materials printed in four languages and presentations of the project to economic sectors.

3. **Virtual Romanesque Centre** presents the entire content of Transromanica to motivate potential users, and its „press room” systematically brings reports on all the project-related events.

4. **Catalogue of Romanesque and tourist resources** is the result of systematic, thorough and complete study of the Romanesque heritage and time.

5. **Transnational routes with 25 top Romanesque places/buildings in five European partner regions.**

6. **Availability of various tools:** e-business platform, CD-ROMs, flyers, brochures in four languages (English, German, Italian and Slovenian).

7. **Reinforcement of human capital** (more than 400 persons attended some of the training courses related to the Romanesque heritage) of the partners with the potential to develop products, marketing, management, protection and cultural events involving Romanesque places/buildings.

## 5. Transnational Activities of Transromanica

Transromanica is a project pursuing its set goals. In this process, great importance is attached to its transnational activities, with the following three priorities:

1. **Evaluation** of the potentials of the Romanesque heritage in other countries and devising innovative and transnational, *transborder* marketing actions.
2. **Qualification** of various local participants.
3. **Marketing and international promotion.**

From 2004 to 2007, eight events related to the project took place. In 2004, the Initial Project Meeting was held in Klagenfurt, Austria, from June 28 to 29. In 2005, the first Transromanica Congress took place in Magdeburg, Germany from September 1 to 3, followed by two transnational „Southeast European workshops/study visits”: the first in Montenegro, from September 16 to 20, and then in Slovenia, from November 13 to 16. In 2006, the project focused mostly on the realisation of marketing activities and international promotion, so

Transromanica was presented at the GAST trade fair in Klagenfurt, Austria, on 7 March, and then at the Transromanica Tourism Exchange in Modena, Italy, from September 20 to 24. In the same year, the professional Transromanica Meeting took place in Luxembourg from March 14 to 15. In the meantime, Transromanica was accepted by the Council of Europe as the „Main European Cultural Route”, becoming recognizable by the quality of its monuments, how they are presented, and by the activities conducted, as an extremely important transnational culture product and one of the officially recognised European culture routes. The ceremonious proclamation of Transromanica as a „Main European Cultural Route” was scheduled in Luxembourg in September 2007. The European Institute of Cultural Routes played an important role in this which will be elaborated on in one of the following chapters. For Transromanica to also formally exist as one of the „Main European Cultural Routes” it was necessary to set up an administrative body, organise the management structure, adopt a financial plan, organise a scientific council with international experts and prepare the work plan for 2007. The decisions on all this were made at the latest gathering of the project representatives in Berlin, Germany, on June 4 and 5, 2007, when all the necessary things were prepared for the next financing period from 2007 to 2013, within INTERREG IV.

## 6. The Best of Transromanica

For the time being, Transromanica includes four European states and five of their regions, which pursuant to the research conducted singled out their best and most excellent Romanesque monuments to be organised as a network of routes with related tourism, culture, gastronomy, enology and other types of offers, making a complete high-quality culture and tourism product.

The first, beginning from North, is the German Federal State of **Saxony-Anhalt** with extremely valuable monuments. From the earliest periods of human history to the Middle Ages, from the Reformation to the Enlightenment, from industrialisation to the established modernism, there is nowhere near such diversity within such a small area, so many historical sights and attractions. Saxony-Anhalt is an ideal destination for the lovers of culture, people eager to acquire new knowledge, and others, who only want to relax. Transromanica in this area is represented by the following monuments: the evangelical cathedral of St. Mauritius and St. Catherine in Magdeburg, the cathedral of St. Stephen and St.



Sixtus in Halberstadt, the collegiate church of St. Servantius in Quedlinburg, the cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Naumburg, the cathedral of St. John the Baptist and St. Lawrence in Merseburg, and the cathedral of St. Mary and the former Premonstratensian monk monastery in Havelberg.

The German Federal State of **Thuringia** has more than 400 medieval castles, monasteries and forts, and it is among the richest in medieval heritage. Transromanica includes five most exquisite Romanesque monuments: the church of the Holy Mother of God in Arnstadt, the city of Wartburg in Eisenach, the former monastery church of St. Peter and Paul in Erfurt, the monastery church in Paulinzella and the city of Reichsburg Kyffhausen in Bad Frankenhausen.

At the meeting point of the three major European cultures, Romanic, Slavic and Germanic, at the foot of the Eastern Alps, there lies the Austrian province of **Carinthia**. It is a charming region with 3000 m high mountains covered in snow all the year round and with numerous lakes. All civilisations, some extinct, others still thriving, have left impressive cultural marks worth discovering. The cathedral at Krka-Gurk, the monasteries of St. Paul in Lavantal and Millstatt, the medieval city of Breže-Friesach and the peninsula-church of Maria Worth are Carinthia's contribution to Transromanica.

**Slovenia**, the green heart of Europe, lies between the mountains of Austria and Italy, the flatlands of Hungary and the warm Adriatic Sea. Some of the witnesses to the rich Slovenian history and cultural heritage are Romanesque castles, monastery cloisters and churches, with Slovenian identity formed through intensive cultural life. It is reflected in the villages and in city architecture, numerous folklore, popular and cultural events, museums and galleries. Slovenian examples of Transromanica are: the Romanesque city of Podsreda, St. Mary of the Assumption church in Koper, the Cistercian monastery of Stična, the parish church of St. Martin in Laško and the church of St. George in Ptuj.

**Italy** participates in Transromanica with five exquisite Romanesque monuments located in three provinces. In the province of Modena there are the cathedral in the city of Modena, the monastery of St. Sylvester at Nonantola and the parish church of St. Mary at Castello (la Sagra) in Carpa. In the province of Ferrara there is the cathedral in the city of Ferrara, and in the province of Parma there are the cathedral and the baptistery in the city of Parma.

## Transromanica and the European Institute of Cultural Routes

In July 1997, the non-profit organisation **European Institute of Cultural Routes** was established in Luxembourg as the European public service and agency for technical assistance, since 1998 in charge of developing the Council of Europe program of cultural routes. The responsibilities of the European Institute of Cultural Routes are to:

- Help project facilitators in finding European partners,
- Further the political and cultural mission by acting in accordance with the policy of the Council of Europe: promoting the European identity, multiculturalism, protection of minorities, etc.,
- Carry out pilot-projects and research programs,
- Take care of and replenish its own library, archives and databases.

Considering the importance of Transromanica, and regarding its future success, the project began to be associated with the Institute already in 2005. This was possible because from its early beginnings, Transromanica was organised in accordance with some of the provisions of *Resolution (98)4 on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe* adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 March 1998. This particularly applies to the articles providing that „... one of the main aims of European cultural co-operation is to promote the European identity in its unity and its diversity...”, and that „...the identification of European values and a common European cultural heritage may be achieved via cultural routes tracing the history of peoples, migrations, and the spread of the major European currents of civilisation in the fields of philosophy, religion, culture, arts, science, technology and trade,...”.

The cultural routes of the Council of Europe are projects that *spread values* because they are based on heritage and memory, democracy and citizenship. They are focused on *common themes in various European countries*, and each theme is realised through a series of cooperative projects. An important component is the *transborder cooperation* pursuant to which common themes are studied and dealt with in different countries, to encourage *research and development* by groups of multidisciplinary experts. Great attention is paid to *pilot and innovative actions* based on European interpretations, contemporary creations and skills, young audiences/beneficiaries, leading to sustainable tourism and, eventually,



the *proper, true way*: profiling Europe as a destination. The examples of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe include particularly:

- *European routes*: Santiago de Compostela – Via Francigena – Via Regia – Via Carolingia,
- *European themes*: silk, Baroque, parks and gardens, landscapes, industrial heritage, military architecture and fortifications, Jewish heritage, monastic influences,
- *Migrations, movements, networks*: Vikings, Hanseatic towns, migration heritage, and
- *Persons*: Mozart, Saint Martin.

## 7. The Future of Transromanica

Transromanica lives in partner regions as a product. The guiding motive is the Romanesque heritage in the individual region, with associated functional content such as the gastronomic and enological offers, cultural events and other offers that complement the experience. Every product is developed for the market and sold by travel agencies in packages, separately or in combination with other options, as desired by the customers. The first phase of Transromanica has been completed, but the project is not finished yet.

In the next period, Transromanica will:

- Extend the partner network,
- Strengthen partnerships with Hungary, Poland, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Croatia...,
- Develop new route networks, regional and transborder,
- Set up an international coordinating office, as an association or foundation, to coordinate the entire network of routes internationally, and to seek funding,
- Continue and extend the cooperation with the European Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and
- Continue to systematically work towards making the entire network of routes recognised as a **big cultural route**.

The partners of Transromanica will exercise their future activities in the following areas i.e. working groups dealing with: tourism, art/culture, science, youth/students, marketing and organisation/funding.

The work in *tourism* will be focused on the organisation of the network of cultural tourist routes dedicated to the European Romanesque art. The working group for *Art/Culture* will be tasked with developing innovative cultural projects at Romanesque places. Within the framework of *Science* a Scientific Council will be set up to scientifically monitor further development of the project, and the

working group responsible for *Youth/Students* will work on the popularisation of Transromanica among this population interested in the Romanesque heritage as well as on their intensive exchange. *Marketing* will include the creation of an international brand acceptable to all partners, and appearances at international tourism fairs will include joint advertising and presentations. The working group on *Organisation/Funding* will consider all the possibilities for funding the future activities and events of Transromanica through the payment of membership fees, co-financing through public tendering procedures, sponsorships, etc. Such an organisation of the future activities and working groups should attract various partners from different European countries, increase the interest in art and culture beyond the national borders, and encourage regional development through cultural tourism.

In addition, special attention will be paid to Transromanica in the new financial cycle of INTERREG IV for the period from 2007 to 2013. In this period, attention should be focused on the marketing of cultural tourism, quality management structure, innovative visitor management and communication technologies i.e. management, animation and complete care for the visitors. To this end the following is envisaged:

- Employment growth in cooperation with small and medium-sized businesses, e.g. tour operators, receptive travel agencies and others, particularly the employment of young people,
- Promotion of sustainable tourism through the development of culture tourism and development of environmentally friendly policies for tourism, and
- Providing self-reliant protection for the Romanesque heritage from its own income.

## 8. Transromanica and Croatia

Croatia was made familiar with Transromanica in 2005. That year, a representative of the main project facilitator, the Ministry of Construction and Transport of the German province of Saxony-Anhalt, contacted the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and presented all the relevant facts with an invitation to cooperation, and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia notified the department for tourism at the Ministry for Maritime Affairs, Tourism, Transport and Development of the Republic of Croatia (MMTPR). Realising the value of the project and the potentials of Croatia which is rich in valuable and well-preserved Romanesque heritage, and considering that at that time activities for the implementation of the Policy for the Development of Culture Tourism in Croatia were under



way aiming among other things at developing cultural and tourist products to support the prospects of sustainable development, there followed an attempt to establish a more constructive cooperation between the two aforementioned ministries. However, this attempt did not quite succeed. MMTPR made effort to involve potential participants in the project to develop Romanesque route(s): the National Tourist Board of Croatia (HTZ), local Tourist Boards, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK), individual faculties and institutes, and private businesses. Moreover, MMTPR took part in all the transnational activities of Transromanica in 2005. Nevertheless, by the end of 2005, with the changes at the MMTPR and the inactivity of the Ministry of Culture, the activities related to Croatia's cooperation in this project petered out. To date, there have been no concrete results i.e. no key Romanesque monuments in Croatia have been selected as required for the inclusion of our country in the transnational route network. It is noteworthy that the Transromanica Meeting in Luxembourg on March 14 and 15 2006 was attended by a representative of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia who presented the selection of the Romanesque heritage of Croatia, showing that our country has an exquisite Romanesque heritage potential for its inclusion in the project. However, nothing tangible came of it. With a new Transromanica funding cycle that is to start within INTERREG IV at the end of 2007, Croatia has again been offered the opportunity to join the project. To this end an operative body should be set up, an association, organisation or alike to coordinate all the local activities related to Croatia's participation in the project, but the necessity to involve state institutions, the Ministry of Culture, MMTPR and the National Tourist Board, is beyond any doubt. Finally, Croatia has well and systematically registered medieval heritage, including its Romanesque portion with representative monuments and sights, and money and efforts are being invested in their restoration and maintenance, so Croatia certainly deserves to be part of the great European Romanesque family

to which it is closely related in terms of geography, history, culture and art.

## 9. Conclusion

Transromanica is a successful European transnational project. Its goal to link together all the interested European countries on the basis of their common cultural and historical roots, in this case their Romanesque heritage, has been fully achieved. Consequently, the European countries in question, or their regions rich in the Romanesque heritage, actively participate in the culture tourism that drives sustainable development of the area in which it is taking place.

Transromanica is a project with clearly defined goals, secure funding, active participants, capable management and specific, actionable results. Such an approach has provided for the recognition of the project as a whole within the European cultural context, and Transromanica has been added to other officially accepted „Main European Cultural Routes». The project will build on its current achievements to include, among other things, other European countries with rich Romanesque heritage. Considering the value and the state of preservation of the Romanesque heritage in Croatia, efforts need to be made to see our country among the active participants in the project. Our admission to Transromanica would bring the first proper, tangible product for culture tourism to promote sustainable development in Croatia, and the local offer of culture tourism would be enriched by a unique itinerary based on heritage, as a confirmation of our identity and our belonging to a broader European cultural circle. Through the promotion of the future Croatian Transromanica at numerous tourism fairs that we regularly attend, we could additionally stir interest in our country and attract many more visitors interested in specific, well-devised products in culture tourism. Transromanica has already proved to be a good choice in the countries where it is offered, and there is no doubt that the same should be expected in Croatia as well.

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